WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE A. F. OF L., BY INSTRUCTION OF ST. LOUIS CONVENTION, DIRECTED THE OFFICERS AT HEADQUARTERS TO FURNISH A WEEKLY NEWS LETTER, FREE OF COST, TO ALL OFFICIAL LABOR PUBLICATIONS.

Containing a brief summary of important matters, affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will further the development and progress of the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR
HEADQUARTERS
801-809 G ST. N. W., WASHINGTON, D. C.
FRANK MORRISON, SECRETARY SAMUEL GOMPERS, PRESIDENT

ARRESTED AND KIDNAPPED

Secretary McNamara of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers Spirited Away From Indiana.

TWO OTHER MEN ALSO TAKEN

Property of Organization Seized and Held by Officers Without Due Process of Law.

Washington, April 29.--The dispatches from Indianapolis, Ind., containing the news of arrest and kidnapping of Secretary McNamara of the Bridge and Structural Iron Workers, together with two other men, charged with being the perpetrators of the explosion which destroyed the Los Angeles Times Building, came as a shock to the labor world. The manner in which these men have been arrested and spirited to California, the unlawful seizure and retention of the national union's property, deserves the severest condemnation and criticism.

The question of guilt or innocence of the crime charged is not a matter to be determined by detectives or antagonistic employers' associations, but by an impartial jury after both sides have had their day in court.

The methods employed in the arrest and the subsequent kidnapping suggests that in the execution of the forms of law much partiality is used. A conspicuous incident is brought prominently into view at this time when it is related that Governor Mount of Indiana refused to honor a requisition of the Governor of Kentucky to deliver William S. Taylor to officers of the law, the latter having been indicted for the murder of Governor William Goebel. Succeeding governors of Indiana assumed the same attitude as did Governor Mount. In that case hearings were had, but these governors refused to honor the requisition.

Governor Marshall, however, without for a moment considering the rights of the citizen of his state, honored in secret a requisition for the union official and the other men. When organized labor protested the governor then declared, although belated, that should any other citizen of Indiana be demanded by another state in connection with this affair he would be given a hearing before being released to the officers of the state demanding him. If Governor Marshall is right in the stand he latterly took, then he must be wrong in the former.

The fourteenth amendment to the constitution of the United States

inaugurated. The increases allowed to the unskilled workmen sometimes run from 30 to 100 percent, yet does not reach the wage paid to the skilled mechanic. It is only another plan to destroy unions, for workmen are absolutely to be dealt with individually, the representation by committees to be done away with.

AN EXPERIMENTAL MINE

Government Will Actively Operate a Coal Mine to Procure Scientific Data for Bureau of Mines.

Washington, April 29--A government-operated mine to be run not for profit, but to obtain scientific data, will begin operation about May 1, when the new experimental coal-mining plant at Bruceton, Pa. near Pittsburg, is opened. Scientific men and mining experts will experiment under actual mining conditions to obtain for the United States Bureau of Mines information which they hope will be useful in the prevention of such terrible loss of life as occurred in the Pancoast mine, at Throop, Pa.; the Banner mine, at Littleton, Ala., and the disaster at Cherry, Ill.

Great progress has been made in the last three years by the Bureau of Mines in determining the exact cause of certain disasters occurring in mines, and has sought out methods which mitigate to great degree the loss of life. Since rescue cars, of which there are now six, were put in operation, it has been possible to practically educate 6,000 miners every year along scientific lines accident preventive measures as well as giving them a thorough knowledge of rescue work. The advance in rescue work can be calculated when it is known that 600 oxygen helmets have been sold by one concern during the last two and a half years. The helmet permits the wearer to remain in a mine filled with gases approximately two hours. Officials of the bureau state that during the month of March, this year, there was an attendance at the rescue car lectures over 10,000 miners. The lectures are delivered by an experienced mining engineer.

UNION LABOR CLAUSE

Wheeling, W. Va., City Council Passes an Ordinance Specifying Employment of Union Labor.

Washington, April 29.--The City Council of Wheeling, W. Va., passed an ordinance providing for a bond issue of $300,000 for the erection of a filtration plant. A clause in the ordinance specifically declares that union labor only shall be employed.

TRUST PUTS ON SCREWS

United States Steel Corporation Closes Down Portion of Plant and Lays Off 3,000 Men.

Washington, April 29.--At the plant of the Steel Trust at Birmingham, Ala., it is reported that a portion of the works has been closed down and 3,000 men thrown into idleness. Chairman Underwood of the Ways and Means Committee, Congressman from the Birmingham district, stated on the floor of the House during the closing hours of the Reciprocity Debate that this act on the part of the trust was to punish him for his advocacy of the measure.

IMMIGRANT DISTRIBUTION

Large Numbers of Russian Jews Distributed Over Wide Area in This Country and Canada.

Washington, April 29.--The Industrial Removal Office of New York City distributed in the ten years in which it has been in operation nearly 55,000 persons over 1,300 cities in this country and Canada. Most of these persons were Russian Jews, and include clerks, teachers and mechanics whose trades have, by the relentless march of industrial progress, been rendered obsolete. A part of the work consists of efforts to popularize the idea of distribution and to spread among the dependents upon wages the opportunities for a livelihood presented in the interior of the country. It also has a tendency, it is claimed, to encourage the immigrants to rely upon their own powers and resources and thus contribute to the solution of their own social problem.

RAILWAY MAIL CARS

First Law for the Protection of Mail Clerks Will Become Effective in About Sixty Days.

Washington, April 29.--Two legislative acts relating to the mail cars in use by the railways will become operative next July and on July 1, 1916. The first law going into effect provides that after July 1, this year, the government will not accept or pay for the use of wooden railway mail cars used between steel cars, or between a locomotive and a steel car. The other act, which in effect will compel the use of steel mail cars on all main lines, provides that after July 1, 1916, the railway companies shall not be allowed to use wooden mail cars in trains in which a majority of the cars is composed of steel. The railway mail clerks have for years made vigorous protests to the government against the use of wooden cars. They have insisted that the wooden cars were the most dangerous in the trains, the balance of the train usually being made up of steel cars, the result being that in any wreck the mail cars were splintered and their occupants almost inevitably killed or wounded.

CONVICT LABOR

Four Bills Have Been Introduced in the House of Representatives Dealing with Question.

Washington, April 29.--Bills have been introduced by Representatives Gardner of New Jersey, Austin of Tennessee and Booher of Missouri to regulate the sale of convict made goods. The Booher bill provides that merchandise manufactured in one state and shipped to another "shall, upon arrival, be subject to the operation and effect of the laws of such state." Gardner introduced two bills, one being similar to the Booher bill, the other prohibiting the government from contracting, buying or using any article manufactured by convicts. The Austin bill goes still further and prohibits any carrier of interstate commerce to take for shipment the product of any factory or mine when such shipment is destined to points outside the state where product is produced by convict labor.

FARR'S MAIDEN EFFORT

Labor Member from the Scranton District of Pennsylvania Makes Initial Speech in Congress.

Washington, April 29.--Congressman Farr, a member of the typographical union, made his first address to the House of Representatives on the Canadian Reciprocity Treaty. Irrespective of whatever views may be held on this question he made a creditable address and received marked attention for a new member. His argument was clear and showed a grasp of national affairs that would do credit to many of the older members. He favored the measure, and in its handling gives assurance that when labor measures are under consideration he will prove a valuable ally to the cause of labor.

STREET CAR MAIL BOXES

Agitation Going on in Washington to Install Mail Boxes on Traction Cars Not Meeting With Success.

Washington, April 29.--There have been some efforts made to have mail boxes installed on the street cars of the District, but is meeting with considerable opposition from various sources. The main reason for the objection is the fact that it will undoubtedly cripple the service in that time must be consumed in emptying these boxes, which must be done at stated periods. At nearly every hour of the day in Washington the cars are crowded with a consequent slow schedule, making it difficult even under the present circumstances to deliver passengers to the down town section or the government works on schedule. Efforts are being made to keep the traction companies in the business of carrying passengers only.

ANOTHER MINE DISASTER

Another Accident Added to the Long Train of Fatal Explosions Arising from Coal Mine Operation.

Washington, April 29.--Twenty-three miners have been entombed in Ott mine #20 of the Davis Coal & Coke Company at Elk Garden, West Virginia, forty miles south of Cumberland, Md. About half of the men are married and have families. All hope has been abandoned of saving the miners, as the mine is filled with a stifling smoke. The Bureau of Mines have dispatched two men with oxygen helmets to the scene. The future attention of the government must be redoubled to prevent the repeated occurrences of these terrible catastrophies.

FAVORS INCREASED WAGE

District of Columbia Postmaster Declares That Postal Clerks Should Receive Better Pay.

Washington, April 29.--At a meeting held in Washington, at which was present the local postmaster, N. A. Merritt, discussion arose as to efficiency and the wage question. The local postmaster favored the increase of the wages of postal clerks, and also the extension of the annual leave of fifteen days to thirty days. This comes upon the heels of agitation for increases in the railway mail service as well as in other departments, and is significant.

BRITISH EMIGRANTS

Emigrants' Information Office at Westminster, South Wales, Doing a Large Business.

Washington, April 29.--Advices received here are to the effect that there are large numbers of immigrants of British descent coming to this side of the Atlantic this year. Immigrant agents are circulating information to the effect that teh busy season in Canada has just begun and that immigrants should start as soon as possible. It is also stated by these agents that "farm laborers and strong men for railway construction are needed, but few building mechanics." Several important public works are under construction, or authorized, in South Australia, and there is such a demand for labor that the South Australia, and there is such a demand for labor that the South Australian Government is reviving the system of assisted passages, which have been stopped for many years.

ANOTHER INJUNCTION

International Association of Marble Workers in Chicago Is Restrained from Doing the Usual and Unusual.

Washington, April 29.--A copy of a restraining order recently issued by the superior court of Cook County, Illinois, against the International Association of Marble Workers has just been received. It beats the ordinary labor injunction by a mile or two, and deprives the union from:

"Inducing or soliciting persons to leave the service of the complainants; from calling upon the employes of the company for the purpose of inducing them to leave their employment; from attempting to induce persons to abstain from working or accepting work from the complainants; from organizing or maintaining any boycott against the complainants; from calling strikes, or endeavoring to have strikes called against buildings in which employes of complainants are employed; from paying or promising to pay strike benefits; from further maintaining or assisting to maintain the strike against the complainants."

All of which things labor unions have the legal right to do, yet the judge in this instance, as in many other instances, becomes in composite form the legislative, judicial and executive authority.

SPIRITUAL ENTHUSIASM

Religious Wave Closes Down Barrel and Crate Factory and Portion of American Tobacco Company.

Washington, April 29.--By the advent into Norfolk, Va., of Rev. C. W. Morris, a negro preacher who recently accepted the pastorate of the Bank Street Baptist Church, an intense religious revival is under way. In a factory manufacturing barrels and crates several hundred negroes while at work began singing, and the fervor reached the point where the establishment was forced to close down. The same incident was duplicated on one floor of the American Tobacco Company, in its stemmery department. Rev. Morris is praised highly for his influence, even though he did close down industry. Were these same negroes endeavoring in the same manner to enhance their material interests an entirely different story would be told.

COLD STORAGE WORKERS

Workers in Low Temperatures Contract Various Ailments--Hours too Long.

Washington, April 29.--Workers in the cold storage plants of Great Britain are restless. So many complaints have reached the Home Office in regard to the discomfort and even injury to health arising from the exposure of workers in cold storages, owing to the low temperatures, that several suggestions have been set forth by the Chief Inspector of the Factory Department of the Home Office with a view of bringing these storages under the Factory Act. The duration of employment of casual laborers in refrigerator rooms--and mostly casual laborers are employed under a small regular staff--appears to vary from two to five hours, and the low temperatures are alleged to produce bronchitis, rheumatism, neuralgia and lumbago.

TEXTILE WORKERS LOCKED OUT

Carpet Manufacturing Establishment Denies Right of Its Employes to Organize.

Washington, April 29.--A concern in Toronto, Canada, engaged in the manufacture of Brussels carpet has locked out its employes because they became members of a local union attached to the United Textile Workers. The general officers of the Textile Workers made every effort to reach an amicable adjustment of the affair, but the firm declared that "no union member would be employed". A document was presented to each member to sign, obligating himself to cease affiliation in a labor union. With unanimity the employes refused to sign away their constitutional rights, and the lockout followed. There are 114 employes effected.

TELEGRAPHERS' INCREASE

Employes of Illinois Central and Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Receive Splendid Advances.

Washington, April 29.--The railroad telegraphers, members of the Order of Railway Telegraphers, have just been the recipients of an addition to their pay checks. The amount of the wage advance on the Illinois Central system amounts to $82,000 per year, while the approximate raise to the key men on the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul totals $100,000. These advances were arrived at amicably.

LOOKING BRIGHTER

The Controversy Now on Between M. & M. and Organized Labor Shifting in Favor of Latter.

Washington, April 29.--Detailed information has just been received at headquarters that the parade held in Los Angeles on April 15 was a splendid success, with 25,000 union men in line. Every organization in the city is increasing in membership. The strike at the Bakersfield Iron Works is still on, but indications point to an early settlement. The trial of the pickets recently arrested is proceeding, the selection of a jury now being in progress. The Manufacturers' Association is bending every energy to prove a conspiracy.

declares that "no state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law, nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

The great mass of citizens of our country are arriving at the conclusion that the enforcement, disregard or technical administration of law is largely determined by the strata of society in which the accused moves. Some years ago the state of Texas indicted the Standard Oil Company for violation of its anti-trust statute, and a requisition was made upon the Governor of New York for John D. Rockefeller to answer the charge before the courts of that state. No difficulty was experienced by Mr. Rockefeller in evading the process.

Scarcely a column has been printed relating to the lynching of two Italians in Tampa, Fla., by a committee composed of business men. This same business men's committee also raided the labor halls of that city, wantonly destroyed the furniture and, bandit like, secured the cash in the money drawer and spent it among the members of the invading committee.

The Manufacturers' Association of Los Angeles and the Erectors' Association have been prominently designated as the prime movers in planning the present sensation. The Los Angeles organization is too well known for comment. But the Erectors' Association, then there comes another story. It is alleged to be a subsidiary concern or closely allied with the American Bridge Company, and th latter company is supposed to be a part of United States Steel. The American Bridge Company is the concern that, through "Deacon" Hiram Moe and Senator Conger, debauched the New York Legislature to secure lucrative contracts. The confessions of the "Deacon" and Conger revealed the character of the American Bridge Company.

Just behind us, March 23, the terrible tragedy of the Triangle Waist Company occurred. To the idol of dollars were sacrificed 141 lives. Harris and Blanck, the manufacturers, had been informed of the danger, but heeded it not. The catastrophe came, but these colonels of inhumanity were not even arrested. In their avarice for more gold another factory was opened and, upon inspection, found to be equally as bad a fire trap as their former place of business. But they are still doing business.

The accused iron workers have been charged with the crime of having destroyed the Times Building and the lives of twenty-one people. Months after the tragedy, with a grotesque and sensational setting, arrests have been made, and the columns of the press have been bulging with assertions of what is to follow, with the evident intent and studied purpose of inflaming the public mind to the point where the reprehensible acts of detectives and their allies may be lost sight of.

No good citizen, be he a member of a labor organization or not, desires crime to go unpunished. If the men charged with this terrible catastrophe be proven guilty then punishment should be inflicted.

To the minds of labor men experienced in the struggle for the right there is a conspiracy interminable in its ramifications, and more dangerous than is generally believed. Organized labor's sphere of influence has rapidly and potentially increased in the past half decade, and in this land of dollars the captains of industry realize that the men of labor are becoming an ever increasing force for the amelioration of all forms of abuses against humanity. With the steady advance of this humanizing influence greed and avarice must recede and more equitable relations established. Organized labor is inured to hardship, the justice of its creed is unquestionable and its courage undaunted. The men of labor protest that special innovations be inaugurated in an effort to cast odium upon it, but it is willing and ever ready to meet in the open every antagonist, with hope and faith firmly imbedded that justice will eventually prevail.

CIVIL SERVANTS' DEMANDS

Civil Service Machinery in Great Britain on a Par with That of American Government.

Washington, April 29.—Clerks employed under the civil service in England are objecting to the manner in which the officials are enforcing the Civil Service Act, and the second division clerks are endeavoring to secure the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the methods of appointment, barriers to promotion from the ranks, and other grievances, and are soliciting the aid of every member of Parliament. This demand has arisen out of the discussion on the Holmes circular, which was recently discussed in Parliament. The second division clerks complain that the administrative posts in the Civil Service are nearly all filled either by direct patronage, or from the first division, which is recruited from either Oxford or Cambridge Universities. The second division clerks also state that in the Board of Education, the Foreign Office, and the Lord Chancellor's establishment, there is no open competition, and that all posts are gained by nomination. They also complain that there is a strong movement to dispense with competitive examination in other State Offices, in favor of a system of patronage and that many appointments can only be secured by "influence". They also contend that as no effort is made to use the ability and experience of clerks in the second division, they are discouraged, and the State sustains a heavy loss. If they can secure the formation of a Royal Commission they hope to have a representative upon it to look after their interests. A similar state of affairs exists in Washington, D. C.

COMPULSORY INVESTIGATION

National Arbitration Tribunal Proposed Which Undoubtedly Means Compulsory Arbitration.

Washington, April 22.—A bill to create a national arbitration tribunal has been introduced in the House. It provides for a permanent board of six members, the Secretary of Commerce and Labor to be ex officio, with no vote, the other members to be appointed by the President. The general plan outlined in the bill is similar to other pronouncements looking to compulsory arbitration. This bill will be closely watched.

WALES COAL STRIKE

Miners Standing Firm and Another Conference Has Been Refused by the Council.

Washington, April 29.—The strike of miners in the Cambrian Combine still goes on, and at a meeting of the South Wales Miners' Federation, at Cardiff, during the week, an appeal was made from the Blaenavon district that another conference should be called to consider the policy adopted in carrying on the Cambrian dispute. It was resolved that the Council could not see its way clear to call another General Conference for the present.

THE TAYLOR SYSTEM

Scheme Evolved by a Manufacturer to Drive Workmen at Top Speed Without Regard to Physical Endurance.

Washington, April 29.--For several days a delegation from the United States Arsenal at Rock Island, Ill., has been in Washington making an effort to have eliminated the Taylor system now being installed at the government works. As a result a resolution has been introduced in Congress for an investigation and referred to the Labor Committee. This committee held its first hearing on this matter Friday, April 28. This system is brutal in its application. Work is divided, sub-divided and re-subdivided for the purpose of alloting to a workman a single operation. In the subdivision work is so arranged that a workman only completes a small percent of the whole operation. So far this may be termed "section" work, and is in vogue in numerous industries. But after the subdivision and allotment has taken place the Taylor system introduces a new feature to drive workmen at full speed. A workman selected for a certain operation or section of work must measure up to a high standard as regards physical energy, deftness and mechanical skill. He is then assigned a certain task, an inspector is placed over him fortified with a stop watch. A turn of the head, looking up, false motions, an instant of relaxation, spitting or any movement not in accord with exactness required is instantly caught by the stop watch and recorded against the workman. The highest speed attainable, after experimenting with the most skillful and highest speed workmen, becomes the standard of efficiency for every man to be employed on that particular operation. No consideration is to be given the average workman, no matter how proficient he may be, as the system definitely calls for a very severe process of elimination, and any man that cannot reach the high standard set is to be thrown out.

The object of the system is to transform every factory and workshop into an industri l speedway. The Santa Fe installed a similar plan called the Emerson system, but it has proven a failure. The government has commenced the installation of the Taylor idea at some of its works aside from the arsenal at Rock Island. The "overhead" charge is greatly increased. The "overhead" charge refers to the necessary machinery to keep the plan in operation. Elaborate plans are first prepared, inspectors galore are necessary and when the full cost of the product is computed the "overhead" charges stand out so conspicuous that, even though the workmen are driven at headlong speed, no saving has been effected. Apart from this, workmen, laboring under such high pressure, soon succumb to the high tension and voluntarily leave their employment. Then their places must be filled, and in this effort a constant try-out is in operation at all times, with the result that workmen are constantly harassed and a feeling is engenered that as each is nothing more than an automaton the feeling of interest in the work assigned to the various workmen is entirely eliminated.

Mr. Taylor acknowledges that out of eight men only one reach the mark of proficiency under his system. The workmen are influenced to reach the limit of their speed and endurance by promised increases in pay. But under this plan the skilled workmen are to be almost entirely eliminated. The work being so minutely subdivided unskilled workmen or laborers are substituted for the skilled mechanic after system is

CONTRACT PRISON LABOR

Two Prominent Philanthropic Gentlemen of Indiana at Variance in Regard to Contract.

Washington, April 29.--Some years ago the Indiana Legislature passed a law prohibiting contract prison labor after 1911. It seems, however, that the legislature just preceding the 1910 session extended the time of this law going into effect ten years. A controversy has now arisen between Alexander Johnson and Amos W. Butler, philanthropists and socialogical devotees. One of the reformatories in the state was specifically singled out by the legislature where contract work was to cease and operated on the trade school plan. The authorities, in defiance of the law, leased the inmates to a firm for the manufacture of cotton shirts. Mr. Johnson challenged Mr. Butler, Secretary of the State Board of Charities, to tell the truth and acknowledge that the contract was against the law. When the law relating to an extension of ten years in abolishing the contract law the State Board of Charities extolled it. Mr. Johnson declares that if the law now effective is not enforced he will give the entire matter general publicity.

WOMEN CHAINMAKERS

Employment of Women in Occupations Requiring Man's Strength Grates Harshly on American Ears.

Washington, April 29.--The employment of women in the iron trades in Great Britain does not appeal to the American trade unionist. It is common, however, in the country mentioned and in many establishments the women workers are stripped to the waist while in the actual performance of their duty. This custom, according to the moral code of ethics of our movement, is degenerating and would not be tolerated. In the Cotton Factory Times of Oldham, England, reference is made to women chainmakers, and it is interesting to note that these women have been granted an increase in wages. The paper says:

"Everybody knows Miss Mary Macarthur of the Women's Trade Union League. She has spoken at many weavers' shop meetings in Lancashire, and has also addressed public meetings on their behalf and in support of trade unionism generally. She is the embodiment of ardor and enthusiasm and untiring in organizing and propaganda. She has labored much for some time for the women chainmakers of Gradley Heath, Staffordshire, securing them substantial advances in wages."

GRANITE CUTTERS' GAINS.

All Branches Effecting Settlements This Year Make a Uniform Increase of 25 Cents Per Day.

Washington,, April 29.--In a letter just received from James Duncan, Secretary-Treasurer of The Granite Cutters' Union, and first Vice-President of the American Federation of Labor, it is stated that good wage advances have been procured in the trade thus far this year. He says:

"Our branches this year so far which have effected settlements have got an uniform increase of 25 cents per day, and many of them have signed up for five years, with excellent methods of adjustment of disputes that may arise."